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California Commission on Aging

# AGEWATCH

## Sequestration Impacts Outlined in New Report from OMB

As reported by the California Health Care Foundation, a September report from the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reveals that approximately \$11 billion would be lost from Medicare and millions from Affordable Care Act programs in 2013 if automatic cuts outlined in the 2011 Budget Control Act take effect as scheduled. Without Congressional action after the November election to pass a budget with \$1.2 trillion in spending reductions, the across-the-board sequestration goes into effect in January.

According to the OMB report, the 2% reduction in Medicare spending will come primarily from payments to providers, rather than benefits for older adults, although beneficiaries could feel the cuts if the reductions result in fewer physicians and hospitals treating Medicare patients. OMB reports that hospitals' Medicare reimbursements would be reduced by more than \$5.8 billion, while prescription drug benefits would be cut by \$591 million. Sequestration would impact the Food and Drug Administration with an 8% (\$318 million) cut and the National Institutes of Health stand to lose \$2.5 billion, greatly reducing **funding for research efforts into cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. Both Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program were exempted from the sequestration, along with VA benefits and Veteran's medical care.**

Among the potential cuts from federal health reform programs would be \$66 million from grants to states establishing health insurance exchanges and \$76 million from prevention and public health program funding. CMS, which is largely responsible for implementing the law, would see its program management budget cut by \$63 million. To read more, visit <http://www.californiahealthline.org/articles/2012/9/17/automatic-budget-cuts-would-affect-health-programs-report-finds.aspx#ixzz27PoDWH9J>

Excerpted from California Healthline, *Automatic Budget Cuts would Affect Health Programs Report Finds*, September 17, 2012.



AGE WATCH is an occasional publication of the California Commission on Aging (CCoA) intended to inform, educate, and advocate. The CCoA is an independent state agency established in 1973 to serve as the principal state advocate on behalf of older Californians. The CCoA office is located at 1300 National Drive, Suite 173, Sacramento, CA 95834.

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## Sen. Sanders Introduces New OAA Reauthorization Bill

Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Primary Health and Aging, and 14 original co-sponsors, have introduced comprehensive legislation to update and expand the Older Americans Act (OAA).

Introduced near the end of the 112th Congress's session, S. 3562 addresses a range of critical issues, including economic security, senior centers, chronic disease, and falls. Combining OAA proposals from 10 Senate bills and a number of other informal recommendations, the bill proposes a number of new programs for seniors and their families, such as funding and coordination of dental care for low-income older Americans, greater attention to economic security and special assistance to veterans, Holocaust survivors and LGBT seniors. The legislation also increases support for family caregivers and makes gerontologists and geriatricians eligible for the National Health Services Corps.

Another provision in the bill would require the Bureau of Labor Statistics to improve how it calculates inflation to more accurately reflect seniors' out-of-pocket expenses for health care and prescription drugs. A cost-of-living measure tailored to the real-world expenses of seniors could be used to make more accurate annual adjustments in Social Security benefits, for example. The Alliance for Retired Americans said that the provision in the bill is "vital to the health and economic security of millions of older Americans and their families."

During his introduction of the bill on the Senate Floor, Senator Sanders "pledged to aggressively pursue passage of the bill" during the post-election lame duck session or early in 2013.

Excerpted from NCOA Week, September 24, 2012 and Office of Senator Bernie Sanders, *Senators Introduce Older Americans Act Reauthorization*, September 19, 2012.

## Lawsuit Filed to Postpone October 1 Implementation Date for CBAS Transition

A motion filed in federal court last month by Disability Rights California highlights concerns encountered in the implementation of the State Department of Health Care Service's (DHCS) new Community Based Adult Services program, known as CBAS. Citing DHCS' failure to fulfill conditions of a settlement agreement which outlined terms for program implementation, the motion asks the court to delay the October 1st transition to managed care until violations are corrected.

According to a report in the online publication California Healthline, the original *Darling v Douglas* lawsuit filed by Disability Rights was settled eight months ago. That suit challenged the state's plans to eliminate the Adult Day Health Care benefit for Medi-Cal beneficiaries and resulted in a new implementation plan for the CBAS replacement program.

Among the actions called for in the motion, Disability Rights asks the court to allow fee-for-service CBAS services to continue for clients who have opted out of the Managed Care CBAS plan until the state's Medi-Cal Managed Care duals demonstration pilot project has begun. The court filing also asks for appointment of a Special Master to administer the Medi-Cal Managed Care transition, and to postpone any further conversion to managed care until the remaining managed care counties can demonstrate readiness. Several provisions of the motion pertain to the more-than 2,400 CBAS eligibility appeals now pending before the Department of Health Care Services. The motion asks the court to reverse denials of eligibility that were not determined in the initial, face-to-face assessment, and to establish a new timeline for decisions and responses to appeals.

Excerpted in part from California Healthline, *Motion Could Delay Implementation*, Tuesday, September 18, 2012.

## NCOA, Partners Bring Senior Hunger to Congress

On Sept. 20, the National Council on Aging (NCOA) joined Feeding America, AARP Foundation, and Maryland Food Bank in a Congressional briefing on senior hunger in America—spotlighting the nearly 4 million older adults who are now food insecure. NCOA also continues to advocate for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funding in Congress. Although the Farm Bill expired on Sept. 30, SNAP is a permanently-authorized program so will continue despite the expiration. The larger threats to the program are proposals in the House and Senate Farm Bill reauthorization measures that call for reducing SNAP resources and benefits. NCOA believes Congress could act to finalize Farm Bill reauthorization or, more likely, adopt a short-term extension during a post-election session in November or December.

Only one in three eligible older adults is enrolled in SNAP, the lowest rate among all demographic groups. The reasons are well documented: seniors are less likely to know that they might qualify or how to apply; they often hold misconceptions about the value of the benefit; they find the application process confusing.

To address these issues, NCOA is working with grassroots organizations to find eligible seniors and help them enroll. One example is a pilot project in Delaware being developed by NCOA and the AARP Foundation that will work to ensure that seniors who use NCOA's online benefits screening tool, BenefitsCheckUp®, automatically have an application prepared for both the Part D Low-Income Subsidy and their state's SNAP program. The project also will include a statewide publicity campaign and personalized, one-on-one assistance from trusted counselors at senior centers, food banks, and other community locations to target likely -eligible seniors and make sure they complete the application and know how to use their benefits.

Learn more about SNAP developments and what you can do from Feeding America and the Food Research and Action Center at <http://frac.org/>. Excerpted from NCOA Week, September 25, 2012.



## ***NIA ADEAR Connects Patients to Alzheimer's Disease Clinical Trials***

Volunteers are needed for research to detect, treat, delay, and prevent Alzheimer's — people with the disease, caregivers, and healthy people with and without a family history of memory problems. Now it's easier than ever to find clinical trials about Alzheimer's and related conditions by going to the website of the Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral (ADEAR) Center or calling the Center. The Center's web-based tool at [www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/clinical-trials](http://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/clinical-trials) allows users to search by treatment or other intervention, location, and age—or to simply [click on the U.S. map](#) to find active trials nearby. Featured trials include neuroimaging, new drug trials and research into inherited Alzheimers and the connection to hypertension.

For more information or to find other Alzheimer's clinical trials, visit [www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/clinical-trials](http://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/clinical-trials), or contact the ADEAR Center at 1-800-438-4380 (toll-free) or [adear@nia.nih.gov](mailto:adear@nia.nih.gov). The ADEAR Center is a service of the National Institute on Aging, part of the National Institutes of Health.

Excerpted in part from e-Update from the National Institute on Aging at NIH, September 24, 2012.

## New AARP Report Finds Benefits from Meeting Needs of Ethnically Diverse Caregivers

New research from the AARP Public Policy Institute finds that meeting the needs of racially and ethnically diverse caregivers can reduce unnecessary hospitalizations and nursing home care, and improves patient transitions between care settings. Using focus groups with African American and Hispanic participants, AARP analysts interviewed family caregivers, nurses, and social workers from across the nation.

The report finds common themes between African American and Hispanic family caregivers and also between the nurses and social workers. The report suggests ways to improve collaboration and communication between families and professionals and identifies changes suggested by the focus groups. On the list of things to help caregivers provide better services are “outside resources to help manage the



needs of their family members,” “more knowledge and confidence, and backup if they need more training and information,” and “care managers to help family caregivers navigate the complicated health care system.”

The report recommends that health care planners keep the needs of ethnically diverse caregivers in mind as they move forward toward better integration and coordination of quality long-term services and supports.

The report advocates for systemic change to address these caregivers’ needs. “Because supporting family caregiving is a key dimension of a high-performing system of long-term services and supports, states need to incorporate a culturally competent assessment of caregivers’ needs in all publically supported programs.”

*Excerpted from AARP Public Policy Institute Publication Alert, September 13, 2012*

## Fraud Prevention Website Launched by Department of Insurance

California’s new Senior Gateway, <http://www.seniors.ca.gov/>, is a one-stop website intended to provide seniors, their families, and caregivers with the information they need to connect to helpful services and resources, to find answers, and solve problems. Helpful information on the website includes:

- News and alerts about investigations, initiatives and senior-focused events
- How to avoid and report abuse and neglect
- How to prevent fraud, financial abuse and common scams
- Health care information
- Your rights

Senior Gateway is sponsored by the Elder Financial Abuse Interagency Roundtable (E-FAIR) and hosted by the California Department of Insurance. The website was developed through the guidance of the Elder Financial Abuse Interagency Roundtable (E-FAIR), a partnership of state and local agencies that includes the California Attorney General’s Office/Bureau of Medi-Cal Fraud and Elder Abuse, California Commission on Aging, California Department of Aging, California Department of Consumer Affairs, California Department of Corporations, California Department of Financial Institutions, California Department of Health Care Services, California Department of Insurance, California Department of Managed Health Care, Alameda District Attorney’s Office.

The mission of E-FAIR is to protect seniors from financial abuse through coordinated action, sharing of information and collaborative strategies among governmental entities.

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## Center Examines Presidential Candidates' Health Care Proposals

Just in time for the 2012 presidential election, the health care proposals of President Barack Obama, the Democratic nominee, and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, the Republican nominee, are summarized in a new "policy note" by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research.

The policy note presents a side-by-side comparison of Obama, Romney and Republican vice presidential nominee Rep. Paul Ryan's proposals for the private insurance market, Medicare and Medicaid. The summary allows voters to compare and contrast the two campaigns' positions on major health care issues.

The policy note is written by Shana Alex Lavarreda, director of the Center's Health Insurance Studies Program, Sophie Snyder, a Center graduate student researcher, and Dylan H. Roby, director of the Center's Health Economics and Evaluation Research Program. To learn more, go to <http://www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu/Newsroom.aspx>.

*Excerpted from UCLA Center for Health Policy Research Health Policy News, Tuesday, October 2, 2012.*



**AgeTech California**  
Technology Conference and Exposition  
November 15, 2012  
Located at the Hilton Pasadena

California Commission on Aging is pleased to partner with AgeTech California on the Technology Conference and Exposition. Learn more at [www.agetechca.com](http://www.agetechca.com).

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### Upcoming Events

- Assembly Health Committee, Oversight hearing on Managed Care Program Initiatives at DHCS: Assessing the Promise of Coordinated Care, Thursday, October 25, 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., State Capitol, Room 4202.
- Triple-A Council of California, November 14 -- 15, 2012, Sheraton Hotel Downtown, Los Angeles. Call (916) 419-7591 for information.
- C4A Annual Meeting and Allied Conference, November 14--16, 2012, Sheraton Hotel Downtown, Los Angeles. [www.c4a.info](http://www.c4a.info) for program and registration information.
- AgeTech California Annual Technology Conference and Exposition, November 15, 2012, Hilton Hotel, Pasadena. [www.agetechca.com](http://www.agetechca.com) to register.

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